

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 PARIS 12950 01 OF 02 212003Z

70

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

EA-06 SAJ-01 ACDA-05 /079 W
----- 130874

P R 211934Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9643

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION NATO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 12950

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR FR

SUBJECT: FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY: SAUVAGNARGUES UNDER
ATTACK

SUMMARY. OVER THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS, THE PARIS PRESS HAS REPORTED FOREIGN MINISTER SAUVAGNARGUES' POSSIBLE IMMINENT DEPARTURE. LATELY THE PRESS HAS POUNCED ON SEVERAL SMALL BUT TELLING GAFFES THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAS ALLEGEDLY COMMITTED. WITH LE MONDE AND LE POINT LEADING THE CHARGE, THE PRESS HAS ACCUSED SAUVAGNARGUES (AND GISCARD) OF FOREIGN POLICY INEPTITUDE AND LACK OF DIRECTION. IN THE PAST WEEK GISCARD AND CHIRAC HAVE RISEN TO SAUVAGNARGUES' DEFENSE, AS DID THE FOREIGN MINISTER HIMSELF IN A RADIO BROADCAST MAY 17, BUT THE RUMORS CONTINUE. END SUMMARY.

1. LE POINT MAY 19 FEATURES AN UNSMILING COVER PHOTOGRAPH OF FOREIGN MINISTER SAUVAGNARGUES AND THE HEADLINE: "THE GAFFES OF FRENCH DIPLOMACY." STORIES HAVE BEEN PREVALENT IN PARIS FOR SOME TIME CONCERNING SAUVAGNARGUES' ALLEGED INSUFFICIENT STATURE FOR HIS JOB. THE COVER STORY, BY DEPUTY EDITOR GEORGE SUFFERT,

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 PARIS 12950 01 OF 02 212003Z

FOCUSES ON THREE RECENT EVENTS WHICH HAVE INCREASED SUCH

CRITICISM; THE FAILURE OF THE PREPARATORY CONFERENCE ON ENERGY; LACK OF PROGRESS IN CONSTRUCTING "EUROPE"; AND FAILURE OF FRENCH DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO GET IN ON THE GROUND FLOOR WITH THE NEW REGIMES IN VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA.

2. SUFFERT CITES OTHER ALLEGED FAILURES OF FRENCH DIPLOMACY AND CLEARLY IMPLICATES GISCARD, WHOSE STYLE LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR THESE FAILURES--SINCE, SUFFERT ASSERTS, GISCARD HAS BASICALLY CHANGED LITTLE OF THE SUBSTANCE OF FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY. GISCARD HAS DEPENDED TOO MUCH ON LUCK AND HAS INSUFFICIENTLY PLANNED HIS DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES. SUFFERT ATTRIBUTES GISCARD'S BEHAVIOR TO HIS VAST SELF-CONFIDENCE AND PENCHANT FOR IMPROVISATION.

3. BY THE SAME TOKEN, SUFFERT CONTINUES, GISCARD HAS FAILED TO PLAY HIS GERMAN CARD WELL--EXACTLY THE CARD OF WHICH ONE WOULD EXPECT SAUVAGNARGUES TO BE MASTER. GISCARD'S FRIENDSHIP WITH SCHMIDT HAS NOT LED TO COHERENT FRENCH INITIATIVES ON EUROPEAN DEFENSE. EVEN GISCARD'S ABOLITION OF MAY 8 VE DAY CEREMONIES HAS LED TO CONTRE-TEMPS WITH THE DUTCH AND DANES, SIMPLY BECAUSE GISCARD FAILED TO CONSULT WITH HIS EC PARTNERS IN ADVANCE.

4. PERHAPS, SUFFERT STATES, A STRONGER FOREIGN MINISTER WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO TEMPER GISCARD'S ENTHUSIASMS, BUT SAUVAGNARGUES IS "AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE PETER PRINCIPLE." JOURNALISTS HAVE BEEN PRIVY TO A SERIES OF MINISTERIAL LAPSES ON SAUVAGNARGUES' VARIOUS TRIPS WHICH CANNOT BE COMPENSATED FOR BY THE FACT THAT SAUVAGNARGUES POSSESSES "A KIND OF GOOD SENSE;" HE ALSO POSSESSES "A PHYSICAL FRAILTY WHICH OFTEN HINDERS HIM."

5. THE FACT THAT SAUVAGNARGUES AND NOT GISCARD IS THE PRIME TARGET OF THE LE POINT AND OTHER RECENT CRITICAL COMMENT ON FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY IS LARGELY DUE TO HIS FAILURE TO IMPOSE HIMSELF AS FOREIGN MINISTER AND BAD RELATIONS WITH THE FRENCH PRESS. SUFFERT RECENTLY TOLD POLCOUNS OF THE DISDAIN HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES FEEL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 PARIS 12950 01 OF 02 212003Z

FOR SAUVAGNARGUES, AND ADDED THAT THEY HAVE BEEN OUT TO GET HIM FOR SOME TIME. AFTER LAST WEDNESDAY'S WEEKLY COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING, BOTH GISCARD AND CHIRAC RUSHED TO SAUVAGNARGUES' DEFENSE, GISCARD EXPRESSING "HIS SATISFACTION TO JEAN SAUVAGNARGUES FOR THE MANNER IN WHICH FRENCH DIPLOMATIC ACTION WAS CARRIED OUT, PARTICULARLY IN SAIGON." FOR HIS PART, CHIRAC STATED THAT "NATURALLY ONLY FRENCH OBSERVERS DID NOT SEE WHAT ALL FOREIGN

CHANCERIES NOTED: THE ROLE OF FRANCE IN SAIGON. WE MADE THIEU LEAVE. WE PREVENTED THE CITY FROM BECOMING A BATTLEFIELD. THE ACTION OF THE MINISTER, LIKE THAT OF THE (FRENCH) AMBASSADOR, WAS REMARKABLE."

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 PARIS 12950 02 OF 02 212006Z

70

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

EA-06 SAJ-01 ACDA-05 /079 W

----- 131046

P R 211934Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9644

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION NATO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 12950

6. SUCH GOVERNMENTAL RANK-CLOSING DOES NOT CHANGE THE FACT THAT SAUVAGNARGUES WILL CONTINUE TO BE VULNERABLE TO ATTACK. THE FOREIGN MINISTER TOOK TO THE AIR WAVES MAY 17 ON A WEEKLY NEWS PROGRAM IN AN EFFORT TO DENY OR BELITTLE ALLEGED RECENT GAFFES, INCLUDING A RECENT OFFICIAL DINNER AT THE QUAI D'ORSAY FOR ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON, AT WHICH SAUVAGNARGUES WELCOMED PIANIST ARTHUR RUBINSTEIN BY CALLING HIM "MR. TOSCANINI."

7. COMMENT. GISCARD'S AND CHIRAC'S DEFENSE OF SAUVAGNARGUES AGAINST JOURNALISTIC CRITICS WAS TO BE EXPECTED, BUT DOES NOT LOWER GENERAL EXPECTATIONS THAT SAUVAGNARGUES WILL BE LEAVING IN NEAR FUTURE. IN FACT, DISCUSSION OF FOREIGN MINISTER'S QUALIFICATIONS, BOTH

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE, TENDS TO OBSCURE FRANCE'S RECENT FOREIGN POLICY DISAPPOINTMENTS, WHICH ARE DUE MORE TO THE PRESIDENCY'S FAILINGS THAN THOSE OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. CHIRAC IS BEING ESPECIALLY DISINGENUOUS IN THIS EXERCISE BECAUSE HIS DESIRE TO SEE SAUVAGNARGUES DEPART HAS BEEN WELL KNOWN FOR SOME TIME. IT IS NOT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 PARIS 12950 02 OF 02 212006Z

SURPRISING THAT LE POINT IS LEADING THE ATTACK ON SAUVAGNARGUES BECAUSE IN ADDITION TO THAT MAGAZINE'S ANTIPATHY FOR THE FOREIGN MINISTER, THE EDITORIAL BOARD HAS BECOME CLOSELY TIED TO CHIRAC IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS. IN ANY EVENT, SAUVAGNARGUES APPEARS TO BE TIRED OF THE RAT RACE, AND NO MATTER HOW WELL HE SERVES GISCARD'S PURPOSE AS A TECHNICIAN RATHER THAN AN INNOVATOR, HE IS LIKELY TO STEP DOWN TO AN AMBASSADORIAL POST NOT LONG AFTER THE SUMMER HOLIDAYS.

8. POUCHING TEXT OF LE POINT ARTICLE TO EUR/WE.
RUSH

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, POLICIES, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, ALLEGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PARIS12950
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750178-0924
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750531/aaaabbbxb.tel
Line Count: 193
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 MAY 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <15 MAY 2003 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY: SAUVAGNARGUES UNDER ATTACK
TAGS: PFOR, FR, (SAUVAGNARGUES, JEAN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006